



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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10 charter schools receive dissemination funds

Grants fund efforts to share best practices in charter schools

MADISON—"Wisconsin is working to support strong charter schools that enhance student learning and meet specific needs in their communities," State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster said in announcing grants that will help experienced charter schools share information about their successes.

Ten schools are sharing \$767,192 in federal Charter School Dissemination grants; five for new dissemination projects and five for renewal dissemination projects. The schools will conduct activities that describe their best practices, such as charter school operation, improved student achievement, and parental involvement.

New charter dissemination grants went to:

- Oshkosh Area School District, EAA/Oshkosh Schools Third Grade Aviation Charter School, \$150,000;
- Milwaukee Public Schools, Whittier Elementary School, \$100,000, and Wisconsin Career Academy, \$80,000;
- Racine Unified School District, McKinley Middle Charter School, \$75,000; and
- Rice Lake Area School District, Barron County Alternative School, \$63,592.

Renewal grants for existing dissemination projects went to:

- Kenosha School District, Dimensions of Learning Academy, \$70,000;
- Milwaukee Public Schools, Bruce Guadalupe Community School, \$50,000, and Gustav A. Fritsche Middle School, \$100,000;
- Oconto Falls School District, Falls Alternative Learning Site, \$45,000; and
- South Milwaukee School District, Connects Learning Center, \$33,600.

To be eligible for dissemination grants, a charter school had to complete at least three years of operation. The school also must have demonstrated overall success, including substantial progress in improving student achievement; be able to document high levels of parental satisfaction; be able to

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describe the management and leadership practices necessary to overcome initial start-up problems; and be a thriving, financially viable charter school.

Wisconsin's Charter School Program celebrates its 12th anniversary this year. It began the 2004-05 school year with 161 charter schools. Last October, the Department of Public Instruction awarded \$6.8 million in federal charter school grants to support planning for 33 new charter schools and operations in 43 schools that are in their first two years as a school. School districts and three chartering authorities—the City of Milwaukee, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and University of Wisconsin-Parkside—oversee the state's charter schools.

Wisconsin's charter school laws are intended to encourage various programs that may stimulate change, innovation, and creativity to enhance student learning. Charter schools are public schools. They are nonsectarian, employ DPI-certified teachers and staff members, and participate in statewide assessments. A school's contract with the chartering authority holds the school accountable for improving student achievement and meeting measurable goals in their charter.

"These dissemination grants allow established charter schools to share the successes they have experienced with both charter and regular schools. This is a valuable contribution to Wisconsin's efforts to boost academic learning for all public school students and close the achievement gap between children of color, economically disadvantaged children, and their peers," Burmaster said.

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